

recognition and admiration for his amazing accomplishments. He warrants our credit for helping to introduce us to this important place.

He has been described by people who knew him well as a "great spirit" and a great man. Those words merely touch the surface, for his spirit and drive to do better is truly immeasurable, as are his remarkable achievements in the area of exploration. I am humbled to salute this great African-American, this great man.

STATEMENT REGARDING ORIGINAL COSPONSORS OF H.R. 3615

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to state that Congressman JERRY MORAN of Kansas was meant to be listed as an original cosponsor of important legislation, H.R. 3615, The Rural Local Broadcast Signal Act, which I introduced on February 10. I have added him as a cosponsor today.

DR. LEONEL VELA IMPROVES HEALTH CARE IN TEXAS

HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Leonel Vela, an individual who has contributed tremendously to the improvement of public health and wellness throughout Texas. Dr. Vela has served in many capacities at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock and has significantly advanced health education and research. On March 1, he will complete his work at Texas Tech and begin working with the University of Texas Health Science Center in Harlingen. Dr. Vela will be greatly missed, but his investments at Texas Tech and throughout the state will continue for years to come.

Dr. Vela has dedicated his career to public health in order to improve the lives of individuals who do not have access to proper care. He grew up in Texas; his parents were migrant farm workers. Dr. Vela earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Stanford University. At the Baylor College of Medicine, he earned his doctorate of medicine and later received his master's in public health from Harvard University. Dr. Vela is married to Alicia and has four children.

Through his accomplishments and research, Dr. Vela has proven to be an expert in many areas such as diabetes prevention and treatment, migrant health and wellness, border health care, telemedicine, and women's health issues. He has written a variety of medical publications and made presentations throughout the state on various health topics. In addition, Dr. Vela has actively led in significant public health activities and initiatives. He directed the public health response to the Ebola

Reston outbreak in Texas, co-founded the Rio Grande Valley Diabetes Task Force, developed Community Oriented Primary Care (COPC) in South Texas, and enacted the response to the Dengue Fever outbreak in South Texas. Dr. Vela also supervised the first regional birth defects registry program in Texas, founded the telemedicine mobile unit project to take health care services to rural communities in South Texas, and spearheaded the establishment of the "Women's Center" and the "Diabetes Center of Excellence" at South Texas Hospital.

Dr. Vela has been recognized for his achievements through various awards, fellowships, and appointments. He was one of only three individuals presented with the prestigious Plate of Bounty Award in 1999 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for his work in migrant health care. Dr. Vela was named the Selected National Institutes of Mental Health/APA Minority Fellow in 1989, and in 1986, he earned the Kellogg Fellowship in Health Policy and Management from Harvard University. Some of Dr. Vela's state and national appointments include the Texas Medical Association, the Governor's Border Working Group Health Subcommittee, the South Texas Health Education Committee, the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health, the TeleHealth Steering Committee for the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board, and the Good Neighbors National Environmental Board established by Congress.

Dr. Vela has displayed dedication to improving public health throughout Texas and has advanced the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. I would like to thank him for his commitment to providing access to health care for thousands of individuals, and I extend my best wishes to him in all of his future endeavors.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

HON. PORTER J. GOSS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, each year approximately 300 students in my congressional district participate in the Model United Nations program. Acting as delegates from one of the United Nations member countries, these young people are afforded the opportunity to learn about that country, its culture and issues important to the nation; hone their research, debating and parliamentary skills; and interact with their peers on topics of international significance. This opens a new world to many of the students; in fact, some of them are inspired to pursue a course of study in international relations as a direct result of their work in the Model UN.

Among the teams from Southwest Florida is one from Port Charlotte High School which has competed at various forums, including Harvard University, and have amassed many awards, both as a team and individually. Following them to Harvard this week for a collegiate Model UN is a team representing Edison Community College. This is the third year that they have been invited to participate with baccalaureate schools.

We wish them luck and salute all of the young people who are devoting time to learning more about international issues.

NETWORKING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2086) to authorize funding for networking and information technology research and development for fiscal years 2000 through 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Morella amendment to authorize networking and information technology research and development funding for the National Institutes of Health.

As Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, the authorizing Committee for biomedical research, it is my great pleasure to join with Mrs. MORELLA to ensure that NIH receive the authorizing authority it needs to push the frontiers of research with powerful new tools. We were happy to work with the gentlelady from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and her capable staff in drafting this amendment, and ask that my colleagues join with me in supporting its adoption.

Thanks to the Republican-controlled Congress, funding for biomedical research through NIH has expanded from \$11.3 billion in FY 1995 to \$17.8 billion in FY 2000. The Morella-Bliley amendment would authorize future funding for NIH high-performance computing applications to examine issues as diverse as new strategies to provide health care access to underserved people through telemedicine, computer modeling of biological processes to substitute for human embryonic stem cells, and the implications of collaborative biomedical research via the Next Generation Internet.

Again, my thanks to the gentlelady from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) for her assistance in accomplishing this initiative. Mr. Speaker, I also submit for the RECORD a letter that I received from the National Institutes of Health requesting our assistance with this authorization.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH,
Bethesda, MD, February 11, 2000.

HON. TOM BLILEY,

Chairman, Committee on Commerce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to request your assistance on behalf of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on a matter of importance to our information technology activities. As you may know, H.R. 2086, the Networking and Information Technology and Research and Development Act of 1999, is pending in the House of Representatives. The inclusion of NIH in certain provisions of the legislation would help advance biomedical research.

The primary purpose of the bill is to authorize funding for networking and information technology (IT) research and development for fiscal years 2000 through 2004 for the following agencies: National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Energy, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The NIH should be authorized to participate in programs outlined in the bill because, like the agencies listed above, we share the commitment to, and investment for, both the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) and Next Generation Internet (NGI) initiatives. In fact, in fiscal year (FY) 1999, NIH funding for information technology and high performance computing and communications activities was \$110,535,000. We estimate that we will spend approximately \$182,782,000 in FY 2000 and \$217,127,000 in FY 2001 for related activities.

With regard to H.R. 2086, Section 4 of the legislation authorizes only the agencies mentioned above to participate in the NITRD grant program for long-term basic research on networking and information technology. Priority is given to research that helps address issues related to high end computing and software and network stability, fragility, reliability, security (including privacy), and scalability. It is important to note that the biomedical community is increasingly using the power of computing to manage and analyze data and to model biological processes. Recognizing that biomedical researchers need to make optimal use of IT, NIH supports (1) basic research and development in the application of high performance computing to biomedical research, (2) basic research, education, and human resources in bio-informatics and computational science to address research needs of biomedicine, (3) research in, and application of high-speed networking infrastructures such as the NGI for health care, health and science education, medical research and telemedicine through the High Performance Computing and Communications (HPCC) Initiative. Enclosed are the funding levels for NIH in this area.

Section 5 of the legislation reauthorizes funding for agencies in support of the NGI initiative. Though excluded in this reauthorization funding, the NIH has made a serious commitment to furthering telemedicine by sponsoring dozens of projects around the country, in a variety of rural and urban settings. NIH has funded studies about privacy and confidentiality issues, how telemedicine projects should be evaluated, and what medical uses might be made of the NGI. In fact, over the next three years, the NIH is funding test-bed projects to study the use of NGI capabilities by the health community.

In summary, because of the commitment and investment shared by NIH in both the ITRD and NGI initiatives, we deem it appropriate that the legislation allow other agencies, such as NIH, to participate in the NITRD program and to specifically reauthorize NIH for the NGI initiative.

Thank you in advance for any assistance you can give us on the matter. I can be reached on (301) 496-3471, should you or your staff have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

MARC SMOLONSKY,
Associate Director for
Legislative Policy and Analysis.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PRESENTING CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDAL TO JOHN CAR-
DINAL O'CONNOR

SPEECH OF

HON. HELEN CHENOWETH-HAGE

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2000

Mr. CHENOWETH-HAGE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to support the passage of H.R. 3557 to bestow a Congressional Gold Medal to John Cardinal O'Connor. With the Cardinal's retirement arriving in the near future, it is time for us to publicly thank him for his important contributions to American public life.

Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you are aware, Cardinal O'Connor is arguably one of the most influential American Catholic prelates in the second half of this century. He is a Priest, a Bishop, and Cardinal of the Catholic Church. But he is also more than that. He is a retired Admiral in the United States Navy, a statesman, an accomplished academic, and a leader in the pro-life movement.

From his boyhood in Philadelphia to his present-day residence in New York City, Cardinal O'Connor has served the poor and the sick. Throughout his career, he has worked with local charities to provide needed assistance for the poor. Additionally, he was critical in extending health care for AIDS patients in the early days of the AIDS crisis. To this day, the Archdiocese of New York is still the largest health care provider for AIDS patients in New York City.

However, fewer people are aware that Cardinal O'Connor is a veteran. For twenty-seven years, Cardinal O'Connor served his country honorably as a Chaplain in the United States Navy. He later was ordained a Bishop by Pope John Paul II so he could serve as the Bishop for the Military Archdiocese. After serving in this position for four years, he became Bishop of Scranton, Pennsylvania and was then evaluated to his Cardinalial See in New York City 1985.

Furthermore, Cardinal O'Connor provided one of the most important voices in America for the unborn. His commitment to the unborn is a well-known and important aspect of his pastorate as the Cardinal in New York City. He has been an effective advocate for the unborn in both a pastoral and legislative capacity. Additionally, he headed the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is completely committed to ending the horror of legalized abortion on demand and will be remembered for that.

Many times, people on the side of keeping abortion legal claim that the pro-life movement does little to support pregnant women. Cardinal O'Connor's example refutes this. On January 23, 2000, he re-stated publicly promised.

On the 15th of October in 1984, I announced from this pulpit that any woman, of any religion, of any color, of any race, of anywhere could come here to New York and we would do everything that we could if she were unable to meet her needs herself to provide free hospitalization, free medical care, free legal care, whatever she needed so that her baby could be born.

February 16, 2000

Mr. Speaker, we should take this opportunity to commend and impart our thanks to Cardinal O'Connor by bestowing this Congressional Gold Medal upon him.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 3673
UNITED STATES-PANAMA PART-
NERSHIP ACT OF 2000

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have today introduced H.R. 3673, the "United States-Panama Partnership Act of 2000."

The purpose of this legislation is to give our President authorities that he can use to seek an agreement with Panama to permit the United States to maintain a presence there sufficient to carry out counternarcotics and related missions.

This legislation is virtually identical to a bill I introduced in 1998, H.R. 4858 (105th Congress). The original cosponsors of H.R. 4858 included DENNIS HASTERT, now Speaker of the House of Representatives; CHARLIE RANGEL, Ranking Democratic Member of the Committee on Ways and Means; CHRIS COX, Chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee; BOB MENENDEZ, now Vice Chairman of the Democratic Caucus; DAVID DREIER, now Chairman of the Committee on Rules; FLOYD SPENCE, Chairman of the Committee on National Security; HENRY HYDE, Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary; DAN BURTON, Chairman of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight; and BILL MCCOLLUM, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary.

I am introducing H.R. 3673 because Panama and the United States today stand at a crossroads in the special relationship between our two peoples that dates back nearly 100 years. As the new century dawns, our two nations must decide whether to end that relationship, or renew and reinvigorate it for the 21st century. We must decide, in other words, whether our nations should continue to drift apart, or draw closer together.

In the case of Canada and Mexico—the other two countries whose historical relationship with the United States most closely parallels Panama—there has been a collective decision to draw our nations closer together. This decision, embodied in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), was grounded in a recognition that, in today's world, our mutual interests are best served by increased cooperation and integration.

The legislation I am introducing today offers Panama the opportunity to join Canada and Mexico in forging a new, more mature, mutually beneficial relationship with the United States. In exchange, the legislation asks Panama to remain our partner in the war on drugs by agreeing to host a U.S. presence, alone or in conjunction with other friendly countries, sufficient to carry out counternarcotics and related missions.

In accordance with the Panama Canal Treaties of 1977, the United States terminated its military presence in Panama at the end of